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ON FARM LANDS

E. J. Esdaile.

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ON FARM LANDS.

BY


E. JEFFRIES ESDAILE, ESQ.

“BARRENNESS OF ALL KINDS IS EITHER A VICE
IN NATURE OR A VIOLATION OF HER LAWS.”

TAUNTON:

PRINTED BY H. SUTTON, OPPOSITE THE CASTLE.

1853.



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ON FARM LANDS.

THE few words I have submitted to the public, under the head of "FARM BUILDINGS," having been favorably received by many into whose hands it has fallen, I am induced to further the attempt of stimulating the landlords to the improvement of their homesteads, by extending the subject, and drawing their attention to the good results to be expected by so arranging and disposing of their farm lands, as to make them much more productive, both of pleasure to the eye, and of profit to the pocket. Perhaps I am rash thus early to mention the word profit, as connected with English agriculture, and may imagine a slight curl on the lip of one of my farming friends, followed, not unlikely, by a sudden increase of flame in the fire near to which he may be sitting. Well, however this may be, to whatever fate the legislature may doom the broad acres, don't let us give way, rather let it be met, if not with harness on our backs, at least with the plough in our hands, and our hearts in the right places.

My chief acquaintance lying with *Somerset* and *Devon*, it must be understood I particularly allude to those two counties, not only on the score of that

Somerset
and Devon
as exam-
ples of the

prevalence of
small fields
and timber grown
hedges.

acquaintance, but that it so happens they present most prominently the evils to which I am anxious to draw attention, and from which I would fain endeavour to point out a road to escape.

Blessed with a mild climate, and large tracts of fertile land, they yield to no part of England in locations suitable to carry on a scientific and advanced state of agriculture, yet, how is it that, notwithstanding these advantages, in vain does the enquirer ask, when looking about him, passing through the rural and beautiful districts, for those enlightened scenes of industry which often present themselves elsewhere, and under less favored circumstances; indeed it seems to me, strange as it may appear, that the greater the obstacles, so much more does the mind of man exert itself to overcome them.

I wish to be understood that I shall endeavour, as much as possible, to avoid falling into a discussion upon the modes of cultivation pursued by the agriculturist, it may be rather difficult to do so, seeing that the subjects run parallel with each other; but one thing is in my favor, that I am not insensible to my inability for the task, knowing but little or nothing of farming; but were it otherwise, what a beaten track would there be to pursue, for it must be conceded that books of agriculture abound, and, as was said by a friend of mine, "if the land was laid as dry as the subject of farming in print is, pipes would bear a bad price in the market;" nor am I about to expatiate on the beauties of solitude or scenery—that lies more within the province of the

poet and novelist—mine is but a humble attempt to induce landowners to give a more decided character of civilization to their estates than they now possess, by showing them the way to do it, and by bribing them by that powerful of all inducements, SELF INTEREST—I am aware of the obstacles in the way—deep rooted prejudices to be got rid of—resolution required—and the means along with the will at hand; but these, and many more, every one that would clear the way to a new reading must expect to meet with. In the character of an *agitator* I may not be so successful as my brothers in the craft; I do not look to *feathering my nest*; on the contrary, shall be perfectly satisfied to remain quietly within it.

Self interest put forth as the inducement to improve.

The prominent features of Somerset and Devon are small enclosures, surrounded by hedges. In the lower and richer lands these hedges principally occupy themselves in protecting, raising, and feeding a numerous family of trees, chiefly elms, and whether the land is pasture, meadow, or arable, 'tis all the same.

Elms and trees in hedges.

It is hardly to be credited, but true it is,—whole parishes are to be found in which the average number of acres in each field does not exceed two. One would have thought this bad enough, but it does not appear so, for even this miserable allowance is eked out by hedges *twenty feet wide*, which are measured in, to make up the quantity—add to this the numerous trees, ditches not scoured out, and the hedges seldom laid,—never, indeed, until the wood

Average of fields under two acres.

obtains a lofty growth—can it be otherwise that a rank and comparatively worthless vegetation follows? For a moment we'll climb, at the risk of our necks, on the top of one of these hedges, or even venture a footing on the rough limb of yon huge pollard ash, just to be enabled to look around, here we have a view of fields of every variety of form and figure, no two alike, save in their diminutive proportions, some appear in long triangular slips, losing themselves in the embrace of a brother and sister hedge, others attempt a circle more or less successfully; in short, there is no limitation to such fancies, and no little ingenuity shown in laying them out.

Fields of all forms. How the plough gets at these *odds and ends* I don't profess to explain, and if an answer is wanted to the pretty song of "Tell me where is Fancy bred," it may be found in Hodge's head, when he leaves off work and fancies he has ploughed an acre of land. It is not to be told the waste of land within a farm partitioned into sundry two acres enclosures, as compared with one of open fields—it must be, that the constant and habitual sight of such ever presenting themselves before the proprietors, make them, as it were, blind to the defects of the system; otherwise I can scarcely believe that those possessing the means would allow things to remain as they are; nor are the small fields and high hedges confined to the lower and vale parts of the country, but extend upwards. It may be, the fields are a trifling larger, and the fences not quite so rank in growth, and the elm tree gives way to the ash and beech, but the

Difficult to plough.

The eye being accustomed to small fields, the ill effects of them not seen.

main features of the evil remain, and the same obstacles stand in the way of a due cultivation of the ground.

Impressed with the conviction of the very great advantages of a large farm of *one thousand acres* over small ones, say over the like number divided in farms of *one hundred acres* each, and under; and as it is on the former alone a scientific and first-rate course of husbandry can be carried on, I would fain bring landowners, whose estates will permit of it, to my way of thinking, and sit about ridding themselves, without loss of time, of the little holdings, and in the place of such, to concentrate them in one or more large farms, under tenants of capital, both of mind and pocket. Surely it must be more satisfactory to a man to walk over, and have before his eyes, his lands under the most improved system of husbandry, and exhibiting the prolific capabilities of the soil (hitherto never having been developed), than to witness the laborious life and ill paid exertions of men who call themselves farmers, but many of whom are in reality hardly better than day laborers,—nay, as far as work goes, are much more called on, as ill fed, and as ill clothed, and whose wretched expedients at cultivation betray a bad conditioned state of things; these men cannot raise themselves to independence whilst confined within the narrow limits allowed them—of course exceptions are to be found, but, generally speaking, never do themselves any good, merely living from day to day, and from hand to mouth. Now, some may exclaim, “ Well, it is all

First-rate husbandry only to be carried on in a large farm, and such recommended.

Small farmers not better off than day laborers.

very pretty, but what is to become of the industrious small renters, if these holdings are to be taken from them, and added one to the other to make a grand farm,"—the reply to this is, that there is not any thing to fear on this account, for 'tis only here and there that an estate is so circumstanced as to afford the means of adding field to field, there must of necessity always be an abundance of small farms, particularly in Somerset and Devon, where the lands are much subdivided into numerous properties, and where many local contingencies exist to keep them so. Again, it may be suggested that a large farm does not require an equal number of cottages, and, consequently, fewer laborers; the impression on my mind is, that a man of capital *must employ that capital*, and according to the amount of it, together with his energy and education, so will the productiveness and capabilities of a farm be in accordance:—the day is not yet come when the land will bear its increase without the sweat of the brow, the mandate has gone forth, and although the most perfect machinery may be devised, and the steam engine thresh out the corn and winnow the mow, yet the laboring man will be found worthy of his hire, and the cottage to shelter him erected,—so far from a large farm not calling for labor equal to that of a number of small ones, I must require proof to the contrary. In a well-constituted order of things, cottages for the laboring population should be found within, or adjacent to, the scene of operations. I hate the system, happily not yet a general one, of

More la-
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Cottages
not to be
in distant
villages.

driving the working man into distant villages or towns—I would keep him on the sloping bank, or sunny nook of his own garden, not far from the farm house. On the other side of the question, however, it must be admitted, legislative interference has stepped in, and made it the interest of the landlord to pull down the cottages, and to trust to the chapter of accidents for a supply of labor, and it is a hard thing to run contrary to so powerful an advocate, and I lament it is so.

The measure of government calculated to prevent the erection of cottages.

I now will refer, and attempt to show the pecuniary advantages to be derived by the landlord from a *one thousand acre* farm over that of one having a like quantity divided into ten of *one hundred acres each*, and to do so, will contrast the one with the other. The large farm will require a good comfortable house, one large barn, bartons, and cattle sheds sufficient in number and size for the rearing, breeding, and feeding of the stock, and all other accommodation of the kind, to which must be added the costly erection of machinery.

Comparison made of a 1,000 acre farm with 10 of 100 acres each.

The requirements of each of the ten farms are the same, less the machinery, which cannot be supplied to the several holdings. I know what will be said, and that I shall be met with the assertion that it never could enter the head of any man that each should have such a provision—every convenience might be had of the kind by causing the erection of the needful on one farm. for the use of all, and thus the benefit derived from machinery at hand—this looks pretty, I allow, on paper, and good in theory,

but is it so in fact? will you bring me ten farmers, so amiable, so accommodating, and arranging matters between themselves so well, as to find the mill, &c., at their service, just at the moment it may be wanted? I fear not: and bear this in mind, too, that one great use of machinery is, the enabling the farmer to seize the turn of the market, and not only get a customer for his wheat, or his barley crop, but pocket sixpence per bushel, or four shillings per quarter on the gross amount; now, the small holders are shut out from any participation in such advantages; they cannot supply a momentary demand, and thus benefit by it.

That the landlord's interest is much at stake, comparing the calls upon him on account of one large farm, and those from a number of smaller farms, is soon shown: *two thousand pounds*, perhaps will afford every thing wanted in a farm of one thousand acres, laid out in addition to what may already be on the premises; now, double this amount will hardly limit the requirements of the *one hundred acre* allotments, which must each have a house, a barn, bartons, &c., or cultivation could not be carried on,—it is not needful to get into algebra to explain this, and it must be affirmed that, at least as far as building accommodations go, all is in favor of my argument; but there is much more than this,—every landholder has a right to receive the full value of the land he underlets—every tenant of the same to have that land so disposed and conditioned, as to afford him every facility to meet his rent-day—such

an arrangement must be for the benefit of both parties. Now, small holdings cannot fulfil these conditions, the constitution of such will not admit of them. However beneficial, and however attempted to be enforced—a perfect drainage, for instance, cannot be carried out, the first and foremost of all agricultural improvements. I grant, to a limited extent it may, but not to the full developement of the system. It has been stated that as of necessity small farms must exist, and on many such the fields are devoted to distinct purposes, as corn, grass, &c., and casting them together would be attended with some disadvantages, this particularly would be the case as regards *Somerset* and *Devon*, which counties glory in minute subdivisions—here, to turn the one hundred acre farm into two enclosures, would be preposterous, it would effect a change in the character of its cultivation; I won't discuss whether for better or worse, but at all events a landlord might pause, and well consider the question, before he decides. My idea is, that in proportion to the number of acres, and the several uses to which they are applied, so should be the size of the enclosures, and it is on these grounds I advocate extensive farms. I must now proceed to show, that where a gentleman's estate is so fortunately placed, by its size and circumstances, as to admit of large open farms, it is his interest to have them, and not confined to him alone, for the tenants and the public come in for a share—at the word, public, I think I hear, "*Now for a bit of patriotism*;" but nothing of the kind,

A perfect system of drainage cannot be effected on a small farm, and why.

Large farms recommended because on them only can large fields be made.

To set
about hav-
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farms
where
prac-
ticable.

for though it fetches a high price in the market, I have the definition of its possessor before me, and am not envious of the character. Let us suppose, now, a man convinced, we'll say, by my argument, sets himself down to a practical application of it, he finds himself the owner of a number of little farms, rendered almost invisible to him by reason of hedges and trees,—in fact, he is like a bird in a cage that longs to be free; the first thing he does is to divest himself of the present occupiers, they will have notice to quit, one and all: now don't be alarmed, gentle reader, and feelingly ask, what then is to become of the poor tenants, there is no fear about the destiny of these men, for, as I have before said, there will always be an abundance of small farms open to receive a good tenant, and as for one that may not be regarded in that light, why he may be considered as a riddance. The landlord may now be supposed to have had an advantageous offer for his attached farms, by an educated and intelligent man, possessing a capital sufficient to stock the whole, and carry on the cultivation of it with spirit and enterprise—he asks for a twenty-one year lease, which is readily granted, and as a considerable outlay must fall on *his* shoulders, in assisting to reconstruct and improve the property, he would not have been justified in accepting a less period.

On leases. Here it may not be considered out of the way, if a word or two drop from me in respect to leases, or terms of letting lands, particularly when talking about twenty-one years—a good slice in a man's life.

I believe there never has been a perfect document of the kind seen; all, more or less, abounding in ridiculous clauses and impracticable applications; the old form, therefore, cannot be recommended for the ground-work of a lease of the present day, and we must look elsewhere; great difficulties, no doubt, lie in the way in arriving at a satisfactory result; all I can say is, that the less a man is tied down as to cropping, the better, for you may as well have a clause to direct the seasons, as one for the rotation of crops; every farmer knows this; however, in the matter of a lengthened period, great caution should be observed by both landlord and tenant; and, after all, the former has little or nothing to fear in respect to the cultivation, because the tenant, for his own interest, will, in nine cases out of ten, keep it in a high and satisfactory state; it is the last four years of the lease that are those chiefly requiring stipulation. To a man living amongst his tenantry, nothing tends more to pleasurable country pursuits than witnessing the enlightened exertions of a tenant crowned with success—perhaps a smile may be seen here, indicating a picture drawn on one end of the canvass rather too much in castle-air style; it may be so,—but if mutual interest will not afford a good foundation for our best feelings to rest on, what will? It is by no means an easy undertaking to convert ten farms into one, even if they are so disposable by local advantages; a proprietor may not like to sacrifice a number of houses and homesteads—perhaps all, or the greater part, in good repair, and on which

he has laid out much money, and for an experiment or whim, which may or may not turn out to his liking, he has to contend with the prejudices of many of his neighbours, and a host of things of the kind ; never mind ; down with the hedges, and their accompaniments ; in with the pipes ; and let those laugh that win. Were it possible, I would have the farm so arranged as to have the arable all in one part, and the grass in another ; probably, to effect this, some parcels must change character,—a bit of old pasture put under the plough, and a slice of arable turned into meadow, nor is this to be objected to, provided that the tenant lays down as much as he ploughs up, and in a manner and way to ensure speedy success. 'Tis likely I may be telling what everybody knows, and many have practised, viz., that of grass planting, as the most preferable and perfect mode of going to work ; under the common system of seeding out, years expire before a permanent pasture is obtained, whereas, in three years, by planting, you may mow, and get a crop of hay equal and of the same quality. The way to proceed is this, first prepare the ground and show a clean and even surface, and then turn to the nearest pasture or meadow for the required material : should some acres be destined to the planting, it might be worth while to have a little plough, for I can call it by no other name, made for the purpose, something like a trowel, this drawn by a pony or donkey, applied to the surface, pares up the turf, and a boy gathers up the same in a basket, and being conveyed to the scene of action, is torn into pieces,

Advisable
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Grass
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and is then fit to use,—being supplied with a short handled hoe, a hole is scraped, a bit of the grass inserted and covered in at about the distance of eight inches apart, the cost of this will amount to two pounds per acre, or something less. If the field is in corn, say barley, the drills should be set wide, so as to admit more room for the grass planter. In using the grass plough, or common narrow shovel, the ground must be gone over in alternate lines, corduroy fashion, and it is astonishing in how short a time the wounds will be healed, and the place resume its former appearance, without a perceptible sacrifice of its fertility. I most particularly would recommend this method where hedges, dividing pastures, have been pulled down, where trees have been grubbed up, and hollows filled; here, as it were, almost by magic, a sward is obtained, not distinguishable from the old. Those acquainted with rural affairs will understand how much is gained, in fact the obstruction may be said to have departed, and left no sign

Where hedges are pulled down, or trees grubbed up, the advantage of grass planting.

Trees, however favorable to scenery in general, are not so to a farm; the fewer the better on all, for running the risk of being considered a Goth, I would, whilst giving notice to quit to a hedge, include their occupiers,—here and there, perhaps, a fine oak standing in the ditch may be spared, but the maxim that on highly cultivated ground trees are trespassers, must be particularly enforced: it is much better, if it is considered absolutely necessary for a farm to grow timber, to devote certain spots

Trees considered as trespassers

for the purpose, and fence them well in. Many advantages would be unattainable where trees are suffered to grow within the fields,—drainage, for instance, could not be perfectly effected, from the obstruction to be met with from the roots; and it is matter of astonishment to what a distance they will run, and when having reached a drain, how burglariously they effect an entrance and obtain possession.

Draining
pipes.

Pipes are sure to be stopped, whether of a larger or smaller diameter, and as far as such stoppage is concerned, it is only a matter of time; people are much tempted to the use of draining pipes; they are commonly ready at hand, are cheap, and very effective at first; but can they hold out any prospect of remaining so, or is there no fear from the roots of turnips, mangel, &c. ? truth says there is very much. I was lately viewing a large farm in Cambridgeshire, in the occupation of its wealthy proprietor, all the cold and wet parts had been piped,—he told me the mangel roots had entered, and mischief followed; as gravel was to be found near, he regretted not having used it, for by screening, stones could have been had well suited for the purpose. I agreed with him fully that, in

A stone
drain more
effective
than one
of pipe.

every respect, a stone drain is the best that can be, most permanent, useful, and natural.

Many parts of Hertfordshire suffer from wet chiefly on the surface. I have been over farms that from want of drainage alone, were rendered nearly uncultivated, and yet no where could a remedy be so cheaply and easily found; the soil was a stiff clay, here and there of a fertile quality, and all to be made

so. Flints lie above ground in many places, affording a good material, and the drains themselves, to receive them, should not be cut above *twenty inches* deep, yet I saw no attempt of the kind—I don't mean that draining is not done. On a farm belonging to my Lord Essex, and I believe in his own hands, a great deal has been effected in that way by pipes—some *four feet deep*—in my humble opinion a useless expense, in thus cutting through hard clays; and I am at a loss how surface water (and as it has been before said, the land suffers principally from that) can get at the pipes. I learnt of one peculiar feature of that part of the country, viz., that the higher grounds were the wet ones, comparatively speaking, the lower range being dry; if this holds good, no further proof is required to show how readily drainage is obtainable, and how the landlords, either from poverty, apathy, or ignorance, or all, let things remain as they are; but I fear, without an act of parliament to compel those, I will designate as owners of the *outlets of the country*, to cut and keep clean the main water courses, they won't do it. For want of such attention, in any thing like rain, the water is ponded back, and overflows the land in a surprisingly short space of time, even rendering much frequented roads impassable, all which nuisances could be abated, and in a great measure prevented, by view-drains, that is, subjected to be visited by a jury.

Talking of the removal of hedges,—what a metamorphosis is produced in the face of the country; it is

nothing more or less than an advance in civilization, for of what use is an eye of taste, if the possessor of it can't see above a few yards at a time. In husbandry it is every thing ; instead of the ploughman confined to his work in the space of an acre or two, ever on the *twist* and the *turn*, congratulating him-

The advantages of open lands as compared with small fields.

self it may be, of getting out of one corner, only to run into another, he finds himself relieved of his trammels, has room to breathe, and executes his task with less labor to himself, and greater profit to his employer. "*Speed the Plough*" is an old standing toast, responding to it is the theory, to pull down a hedge, the fact ; and I, for one, am new fangled enough to prefer the latter. It is admitted by farmers that corn delights in an open space, and is impatient under trees and hedges, which shuts out the influence of the sun and air, renders the ground foul, and the crop deficient in quantity and quality,—although there is not so much to say against small enclosures, speaking of grass lands, nevertheless they are not altogether to be recommended ; bowing to long custom, and to the nature, particularly of the two counties, Somerset and Devon, I do not insist upon so complete a clearance as in the case of arable lands, perhaps going as far as to keep up something of the character hitherto enjoyed, we may give way a little to old prejudices, and permit a tree here and a fence there to remain ; but whilst thus admitting so much, I am by no means sure that trees and fences should be seen even on lands dedicated to pasture alone ; I have avoided touching on the mode of culture,

although walking so near the borders of it, but I may express a doubt whether natural grasses, that is whether old pastures, and meadows are the most profitable and productive, and give the best return. I will instance the *Isle of Thanet*, as presenting an unenclosed and open area, all I believe under plough, and generally of a rich fertile soil—see the corn crops here, accompanied by roots and grasses in perfection—would subdividing by hedges, &c., better matters?—would the farmers give an increased rent if their farms were laid out into two or three acre pieces? I should say not; men accustomed to till open tracts of country are ever found to object to enclosures of any kind,—in fact, they consider them in the way. A short time since I was riding in the company of some agricultural friends, through that part of Gloucestershire, called the Cotwolds, the country here lies high, and presents a scene of large fields, fenced in by stone walls; and surely if any boundaries are to be defended, these are most easily so. A Wiltshire man, a practical and experienced farmer, addressing me, said—“Mr. Esdaile, I have not so much fault to find with the farming here, as with the stone walls, for what earthly use are they? they give an aspect of poverty all around, and are much better away.” These sentiments were responded to by others of the party; and one man venturing to defend the poor stones on the score of convenience, &c., broke down altogether, and was voted as having failed in his case. It must be acknowledged that the Cotwolds, free of stone walls,

Doubt whether natural grass lands are so productive as artificial.

In some parts of the country a general objection is against fences of any kind.

would present a beautiful undulating country, the summits being often crowned with beech woods, afford a rest to the eye, and the whole district unconfined, might challenge comparison with any in England.

As many men have many minds, we must not be too opinionated, but give way a little to ancient customs and habits of residents, who cannot be supposed to fall in, all at once, with a new and, to them, a foreign order of things: they may love the darkness and privacy of *acre mead*, and *home close* hedges, twenty feet wide, and twelve high, and glory in the profusion and size of the elm and ash thereon—it would be almost a pity to dispel such day dreams of rural life; but, unfortunately, these men require their rent as well as others, and in the present days of competition, in which the farmer is more particularly interested, the two don't agree; that is,—rent, and land forbidden to be cultivated.

The probable reason at first for having large hedges.

In former days hedges afforded, by the strong growth upon them, much fuel for the use of the house, and there can be no doubt but the custom of cutting off the heads of trees and rendering them pollards, arose from the same circumstance; now, however, times are changed, and the facility to get coals, and the ready application of them, far and wide, renders fire wood a material of necessity no longer; indeed, in some places it does not more than pay the wages of the men for collecting it,—thus the land occupied by hedges is undoubtedly, and may truly be said to be uncultivated; and for which the farmer is expected to pay, and does pay, rent and taxes.

I have a strong conviction that the time is not very far off, when a general crusade will be made against small enclosures, that we shall not see them, save only on properties of a very minor description, or near or adjoining to country towns or villages, coming under the character of accommodation lands and gardens. Turning more immediately to my subject of a farm of *one thousand acres* and upwards, where enclosures are the order of the day, none should be less than fifteen or twenty acres for grass, and double for arable, a small allowance under any circumstances—fields should be squared as much as possible—a chess board offers a good exemplification of my meaning; and white thorn planted, only raised above the level by two turfs, is the best fence, it requires protection for ten or fourteen years, after it will take care of itself, where the eye is to be pleased by sinking the ground a little, the thorns could be kept out of sight by being only trimmed once a year, and an open and park-like appearance is obtained. Iron railing is got into very general use, it is objectionable as applied to farm purposes, unless made so strong as to cost too much. Little more remains to be said; but before winding up, one observation, and that is, the necessity of having free and easy access to all parts of the farm, by a firm hard road or two; it is seldom such is seen, or even thought of, though one would think the saving in the wear and tear of horses and carriages alone, would strike any person: strange as it appears, it is only within forty or fifty years that the farmer could get to mar-

The day
not far off
when
small
fields and
trees will
not be
tolerated.

If a fence
must be
had, one
of white
thorn.

Farm
roads ne-
cessary.

ket without a contest with the impediments from land and water the whole of his way. I cannot here refrain from an anecdote as given by an ancestor of mine, M.P. for a now much frequented town, but then little known from the difficulties of access, and the impassable condition of the public highways; he moved for leave to bring in a bill to amend and make good the roads within a certain district; upon which a gentleman got up and asked the honorable member whether it was intended to make them *navigable* or *passable*,—to understand this, it should be borne in mind that at that period the roads were the chief drains of the country, in fact, were great part of the year, water courses, and indeed to this day many are of that character, and must ever remain so, as long as the roads are below the level of the adjoining fields; all that can be done is, to convey the water into the ditch or the side, and keep the hedge cut as low as possible: after all, the traveller in vain attempts to catch a peep at the country he passes through; he requires no Brunell to furnish a tunnel; he is perpetually within one, and 'tis only on arriving on eminences he discovers the beauty of the scenery from which he has been shut out. On the subject of public roads, I say little, but if the present through the fertile vales of Somerset and Devon were abandoned, and new lines carried along on the surface of the country, what delightful prospects would gratify the eye; a great expense would be saved in repairs, now continually called for, and a highway, in reality, obtained to the very letter.

It has been my endeavour to steer clear of politics, and although we all have our feelings in favor of, or against, as it may be, the measures pursued by the ruling powers of the day, yet on one point we all agree, viz., on the necessity of an ample supply of food for the people. Party spirit has greatly assisted to divide public opinion as to how and through what means it is to be procured; one party insisting that to cultivate the English soil for the purpose of growing wheat, is absurd, whilst a supply of the same can be found ready at hand in America, Poland, and elsewhere; the other holding to the opinion, that to the produce of our own industry and cultivation of our own soil, should our thoughts and energies be directed; certainly these latter have history on their side, for we learn from it, that when luxury overran the Roman provinces, the decline of the empire was visible, from the cultivation of the soil being abandoned, and trusting rather to a foreign supply of corn to feed the people, than to their own exertions.

Every exertion should be made to grow wheat from our own soil.

I have said that party spirit greatly influences men's actions—an instance of this was afforded by Mr. Ricardo, when on a visit to the late Sir T. B. Lethbridge, in Somersetshire—*from whose own lips, I had it*—the subject in discussion was the corn laws. Mr. Ricardo. “From what you say, Sir Thomas, it would seem you attach the growth of corn in England as contingent with its prosperity and welfare; now I confess I do not, and so far from it, that if thistles and briars were to cover every acre

of this vale," alluding to the beautiful one of Taunton Deane, "it would be just as well, in a national point of view." Now this opinion may be taken for as much as it is worth, nor should I have mentioned it, but to show the extent of folly to which party politics will carry a man, for it is difficult to believe it to be the result of an unbiased mind, and calm reflection.

On the
injury
caused by
mill
streams.

Thinking as I do that our national existence depends on a constant and regular supply of food, and that produced from our own, and by the labor of, our agricultural population; I hasten to one observation, and well worthy of attention, it is on the rights claimed and exercised over mill streams; times were when such importance was attached to these waters, that laws were made of the most stringent and arbitrary character, to facilitate and regulate the use of them; no doubt, then, as wise and necessary a precaution, as their existence on the statute at the present day is absurd and mischievous. Comparatively speaking, the application of water power to an overshot wheel is of recent date, and it was the consequence of this invention that led to the diversion of the streams from their natural bed, and the causing them to be carried along a higher level, or ponded back to an overflow. To the miller was granted despotic rule over the course of the stream, and he has transmitted the same to his representatives, unimpaired and in full force. Talk of the

Rights
over
streams by

Czar of Russia indeed, he is nothing to our autocrat of the mill—every lover of the rod will understand

me, and I would the public did as well ; but fond as I am of the gentle craft, I fly at higher game, and would gladly hail the day which is to free the streams from their present vassalage, as the most honest radical, when he sees a tax reaching his neighbour's pocket, but avoiding his own. To speak seriously, the injury and loss to the country by the rights claimed by millers is immense, and whilst they exercise them, little advance can be expected towards a more perfect cultivation of the soil, and a corresponding benefit by an increase of production, for how can a drainage be effected when you must not touch the source of the spring ; there are thousands of acres lying wet and cold, and to a certain extent under waste, merely that water should be conveyed to a mill, and which said mill, nine times out of ten, does not more than pay its expences ; besides, the steam engine is at hand, let them apply to it. Of course, what has been said on the subject alludes to those mills worked by a stream diverted for the purpose, where the water runs in its natural bed, or from reservoirs close at hand, the objection don't apply, unless obstructions exist in the outlets of the same, and then your neighbours may suffer, which should not be ; the day is not far off, when these, and other obstacles to the raising of food, will be no longer endured. The majority of people do not shut their eyes to the fact, that if war was to happen, as things now are, provisions might be at a famine price ; owing to the change of the laws, or from circumstances with which we are unacquainted,

millers
should be
set aside.

wheat growing has declined throughout the United Kingdom, and it should be the endeavour of every one to remedy the evil, not by crying to Jupiter, but by putting their shoulders to the wheel.

I have now exhausted what knowledge I may have possessed on the subject which has been treated on ; my humble endeavour has been to direct the attention of landed proprietors to the times in which they live, to induce them to move with them, in fact, to mend their *ways*, and their *manors*, and if I should do this in the slightest degree, I shall have the satisfaction of knowing I have not been uselessly employed.

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